

HOUSE BILL 341

By Harmon

AN ACT to provide for directional signs for the Children's Holocaust Memorial at Whitwell Middle School on Interstate 24 in Marion County.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

WHEREAS, in 1998 eighth grade students at Whitwell Middle School began studying the Holocaust with the laudable goal of learning the importance of respecting different cultures, as well as understanding the effects of intolerance; and

WHEREAS, as their study progressed, the students were overwhelmed by the sheer number of people (six million Jews and five million others) who were exterminated by the Nazis; and

WHEREAS, to help them understand the enormity of this extermination, the Whitwell students began collecting paper clips; the paper clip was invented by a Norwegian Jew, and paper clips were worn by Norwegians on their lapels as a silent protest against Nazi occupation in World War II; and

WHEREAS, to date, over thirty million paperclips have been collected by the students at Whitwell Middle School; in addition, the Paper Clip Project has received more than thirty thousand letters, documents, books and artifacts, which have been counted and catalogued by students and are on display in the Children's Holocaust Memorial Research Room; and

WHEREAS, the paper clip collection has become a part of the "Children's Holocaust Memorial" created by the students, staff and community of Whitwell Middle School; the Memorial contains eleven million paper clips housed in an authentic German transport car, honoring the lives of all people murdered by the Nazis, and another eleven million paper clips are contained in a monument honoring the children of the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS, the students, staff and community of Whitwell Middle School have transformed the car from a vehicle of death into a symbol of renewed life that honors the lives of those murdered by the Nazis and reminds us all of the importance of perseverance, empathy, tolerance and understanding; and

WHEREAS, the Whitwell Children's Holocaust Memorial has earned worldwide acclaim for its message of tolerance, respect and understanding, and it is most appropriate that this General Assembly should assist visitors in locating this historically and culturally significant site; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, it shall be the duty of the department of transportation to erect and maintain signs for sites of historical and cultural significance in this state, including the erection of such signs for the Children's Holocaust Memorial at Whitwell Middle School on Interstate 24 in Marion County at Exit 155 (State Route 28/Whitwell), both eastbound and westbound.

SECTION 2. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 3. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-

state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.